

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 18-21 are canceled from the instant application in light of the rejection of these claims in the Office Action in order to place the application in condition for allowance. As such, the claims are canceled without prejudice to the applicants' rights to file a continuation application and the claim cancellation should not be construed as a dedication of any of the subject matter of the instant Application or the canceled claims to the public domain.

Claims 9, 11 and 13-17 remain pending the instant application. Claim 9 is amended to recite that the method comprises a step of providing a mixture in the form of a slurry comprising about 0.1% to about 20%, by weight of the slurry, starch and from about 0.01% to about 2.0%, by weight of the slurry, fiber and applying the starch and fiber mixture to the paper mat. This amendment to claim 9 is supported in the specification, including at ¶0010 and ¶¶ 0019-0022.

Claim 9 is also amended to recite that the pulp and process water is deposited from the head box to the wire screen. Thus amendment is supported in the specification, including at ¶ 0018.

At pages 2-3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-9, 11, and 13-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 (second paragraph) as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicants regard as the invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 and 18-21 are, as discussed above, canceled without prejudice. As such, with respect to the canceled claims, the rejection is moot

and, hence, comments from the applicants on this rejection in this regard are not necessary. The rejection with respect to claim 9, and the claims dependent therefrom, claims 11 and 13-17, are discussed below.

The Examiner states that claim 9 is incomplete with respect to the weight percent claimed. Claim 9 is amended, as suggested by the Examiner, to recite that the amount of starch and fiber is by weight of the slurry. As such, claim 9 should no longer be subject to rejection in this regard.

The Examiner further states that the recitation of claim 9 that process water is deposited on the wire screen is incomplete since both pulp and process water are deposited on the wire screen. Claim 9 has been corrected, as requested by the Examiner, to recite that pulp and process water are deposited from the head box to the sire screen.

The Examiner also asserts that the claim is incomplete and misleading and thus vague and ambiguous for stating that the source of starch and fiber is the accepts and the Examiner further states that starch must be added somewhere in the process before the pulp and process water is drained or dewatered. Claim 9 is amended to recite that the process comprises a step of providing the starch and fiber mixture and applying the starch and fiber mixture to the paper mat. As such, the claim recites a positive step wherein starch and fiber is provided to the process and added to the paper mat. The claim does not state that the sole source of starch and fiber are the accepts, rather the claim, as well as the disclosure, state that the starch and fiber mixture comprises the accepts. In any event, the starch and fiber mixture is provided to the process of the claims

and, as amended, claim 9 should no longer be subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 (second paragraph).

At pages 3-6 of the Office Action, the Examiner makes the following claim rejections:

1. Claims 1, 3-5, 18 and 19 are rejected as being anticipated by and/or obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,942,087 to Pruszynski with or without U.S. Patent No. 2,197,463 to Bradner.
2. Claim 2 is rejected as rejected as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,942,087 to Pruszynski in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,830,364 to Bleakley.
3. Claims 6-8 are rejected as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,997,692 to Taylor *et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,411,637 to Glomb *et al.*
4. Claims 20 and 21 are rejected as rejected as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,449,437 to Vikio in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,830,364 to Bleakley.

As discussed above claims 1-8 and 18-21 are canceled without prejudice. Hence, the claim rejections are moot and, as such, comments from the applicants on these rejections in the instant application are not necessary. Further, because of the claim cancellations, the applicants are not making any comment on the Examiner's response to arguments set forth at page 7 of the Office Action. The applicants do not waive their rights to comment on or argue against any claim rejections that may be made in a continuation application which are based on the prior art cited in the Office Action and/or the response to arguments.

At page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that claims 9, 11 and 13-17 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 (second paragraph). As discussed above, claim 9 is amended and, as amended, complies with all formal requirements. As such, a Notice of Allowance of claims 9, 11 and 13-17 is earnestly solicited. In the event that the Examiner does not concur with the applicants' position that claim 9, as amended, complies with 35 U.S.C. § 112 (second paragraph), the Examiner is urged to contact the applicants' agent by telephone at (908-722-0700) for an interview so that any further amendments necessary to place the application in condition for allowance may be discussed.

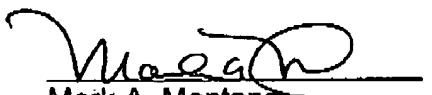
Conclusion

The instant Application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance of claims 9, 11 and 13-17 is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (908) 722-0700 if it is believed that further discussions, and/or additional amendment would help advance the prosecution of the instant Application.

If any extension of time for this response is required, applicants request that this be considered a petition therefor. Please charge any required petition fee to the Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Please charge any insufficiency of fees, or credit any excess, to the
Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Respectfully submitted,



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Page 9 of 9

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